

WORLD RECONSTRUCTION PAPERS—No. 6

Japan and Reconstruction

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Japan issues from the war with two big reconstruction problems: one affecting her soul at home, the other affecting her life abroad. Internally she has been shaken to her very foundations, her German system has been discredited, forces of democracy have been let loose, and a mad rush for gold has set in. She needs spiritual renewal and knows it. Under the stimulus of war trade, for example, she has developed into a manufacturing nation. Factories line her railroads and waterways, black smoke shrouds her hills, and ships cover her seas. Industrialism threatens her family and social structure, her national morale. Here is a people lusting for gold yet with no adequate moral standard or religious dynamic. How shall she preserve her idealism? How save her soul? This problem worries Japan.

Externally, too, she has to reconstruct her ways. Japan comes through with a new international vantage. She means now as in the past to capitalize her strategic position. But this cannot be done in the old way. She has a new path to follow. For this she needs a new international mind and life creating confidence in her purpose and ability to lead the East. This spells another problem of reconstruction.

And it is our problem as well. Eastern Asia as an undeveloped Eldorado of trade for all nations is to be the melting pot of international interest and effort. This coming impact of the races will be tremendous. And in it all will be Japan as sponsor. It will be her ideals and faith, her force, too, which will dominate beyond our understanding. Indeed, the issue of this eastern conflict is on now. How shall Japan adjust herself to this unexpected power? With what spirit of international cooperation shall she hold the reins? One wonders if there is anywhere a more urgent call for Christian reconstruction.

Why will not Christian America see? Why will she not comprehend? Why do we not get busy? How can we as Christian men and women pass by Japan any longer? We may have done so in the past, but can we now? Japan needs us. Japan wants us.

Japan looks to America for help as perhaps never before. She sees the industrial breakers ahead, the social upheavals; she feels a new individualism asserting itself in the wake of a victorious Democracy. Who can help her more than the Anglo Saxon through whom these new forces came into being, and by whom they have been tested and tried these many generations? I recently visited most of the centers of Japan, and conversed with an almost countless number of thinking Japanese, both prominent and otherwise. I cannot recall offhand a single man who

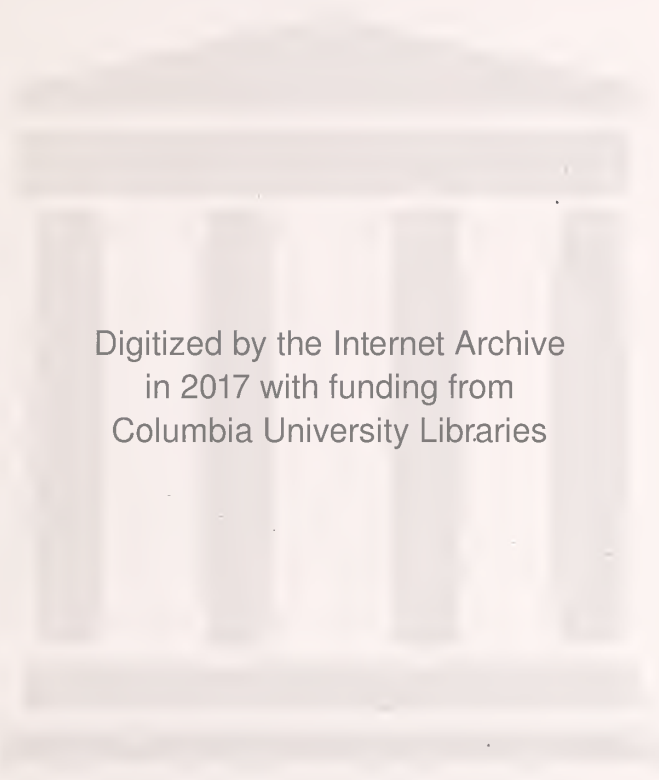
did not show his desire to learn from America during these coming days of such great moment to Japan; indeed, many were pronounced in their call for America's cooperation, particularly along what they called "spiritual" lines.

As for the Japanese Christians, they could not urge upon us strongly enough their desire for more missionaries. Wherever our American Board Deputation went the Japanese urged this more than anything else. What a contrast to the story of twenty years ago! One prominent Japanese pastor of Tokyo said to us: "For fifty years at least we shall need missionaries. We need you as specialists to help the Church at large. We need you as associate pastors in our large city churches. We must have expert religious educators and other Sunday School experts, specialists in Church music and English Bible, student workers and social service experts, evangelistic workers among the industrial classes, and last but by no means least, trained American evangelists to work side by side with our own Moodys and Phillips Brooks." This friend might have added, as so many Japanese did, that there is still need for the all-round ordained missionary for general work in the smaller cities, towns and rural districts where the foreigner has a unique welcome and prestige. Certainly it is true that the Japanese Christians are calling for our missionary help, so overwhelmed are

they by their own sense of weakness in the face of the social and moral revolution started by the war.

One of the choicest spirits I ever met, a Japanese, said to me: "My people need Jesus Christ." Japan does need Him, and *at once*. Never has a nation come to such possibility of determinative power abroad, or to her own change of system within, so poorly prepared religiously; yet perhaps never has the land been more open to the teaching of Christ. Thirty years ago the opportunity seemed marvelous, but it was then largely a change of outward garb. The Japanese in taking over our civilization thought they must take our religion as well. Today, however, the demand grows out of a growing sense of spiritual need, a grasping after that power which will enter the very soul of the people keeping them true to national ideals and international duties.

So Japan's reconstruction call is for more missionaries "of the right sort"; for true sons and daughters of Freedom trained to distinguish between liberty and license; for real Americans who hate class distinctions and rise above race prejudice; for Anglo-Saxons who can submerge their sense of superiority beneath a Christian grace of humility; for Christ's internationalists who so love the world as to be willing to sacrifice themselves in the "hardest of mission fields" rather than see Asia misdirected and paganized by a Christless master.



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